UNITED NATIONS

Distr.
GENERAL

SG/CONF.1/SR.1
9 November 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PLEDGING CONFERENCE FOR EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO THE PEOPLE OF KAMPUCHEA

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday,
5 November 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. WALDHEIM (Secretary-General of the United Nations)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT (SG/CONF.1/1 and Add.1; E/ICEF/664)

1. The PRESIDENT said that the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations had gathered together because they shared a common concern for the welfare of the Kampuchean people and were determined to meet the desperate need which existed following the massive tragedy which had befallen that nation. He had convened the Conference to seek the support of Governments for United Nations efforts to provide all possible humanitarian assistance to the Kampuchean people; that help was required on a massive scale, on both a bilateral and multilateral basis. The purpose of the Conference was not to discuss the root causes of the suffering of the Kampuchean people, or to attach blame, but to alleviate human suffering. He therefore hoped that all participants would co-operate in announcing individual contributions to the programme which the international community had mounted.

2. The United Nations had been engaged over a period of months in a major effort to deal with the problem. The initial phase had consisted of the programme jointly conducted by UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), working in close collaboration with the World Food Programme, which had arranged for the shipment of substantial quantities of food. So far, some 6,000 tons of food and medicine had been shipped. Clearly, however, that was only a beginning; in addition to a substantial increase in emergency food and medical aid, the need for which was obvious, other forms of assistance must be provided, such as help in enabling Kampuchea to grow food as quickly as possible in the form of seeds and tools supplied by FAO. There had been substantial difficulties in initiating operations under the circumstances existing in war-devastated Kampuchea, in which transport and logistic support were virtually non-existent. Efforts were being made locally to cope with the problems but there was a clear and compelling need for a greatly increased international programme.

3. On 19 October he had convened a press conference to emphasize the joint UNICEF/ICRC appeal for $110 million to meet the requirements which those two bodies had identified for the next six months. The current UNICEF/ICRC programme would amount to a yearly figure of $250 million. Clearly the size of the programme would depend on obtaining satisfactory arrangements for distributing the supplies. In that connexion, he urged all countries concerned to co-operate fully with UNICEF and ICRC in facilitating the distribution of supplies on the basis of arrangements that would ensure that they reached the suffering civilians for whom they were destined. It was necessary to ensure that help was rendered on a truly humanitarian and non-partisan basis. Although some progress had been made, some difficulties remained to be resolved, and the Executive Director of UNICEF was currently in the area seeking to work out improved arrangements.

4. Substantial additional requirements had been identified arising from the massive flow of refugees from Kampuchea into Thailand over recent weeks, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would co-ordinate assistance for the refugees. A senior survey team from UNHCR had recently visited Thailand and found

(The President)

that an additional sum of $60 million, including $23 million for the construction of camps, would be needed over the next eight months to meet the emergency. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Thailand for its spirit of co-operation and its announcement that it would fully apply the principle of first asylum; that was a fundamental principle which it was important to honour in dealing with refugee problems everywhere.

5. Concentration on the problem of emergency humanitarian relief to the people of Kampuchea by no means indicated a lack of appreciation of the pressing need to deal with problems of human suffering and survival elsewhere in the world. The case of Kampuchea, however, was one of the great tragedies of the age, and the contributions of States were urgently required if the United Nations was to meet its moral responsibility to do what it could to alleviate human suffering of such an appalling magnitude.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE

6. The representative of FRANCE said that the people of a country in Asia were dying and the United Nations had met to try to save them. War and oppression had already profoundly weakened the Khmer people, but now their very existence was threatened; Cambodia's tragedy, of a duration and magnitude without precedent in recent history, was a challenge to the international conscience. He paid tribute to the Secretary-General for responding to France's request that the Conference should be convened.

7. The objective was clear; it was to save an entire people. It was not possible to disregard the political context of the problem or indeed the military operations which were at that very moment extending its scope; France had already made known its views in that respect, and it was convinced that the United Nations would strive to promote peace in the area. But States must consciously leave aside political considerations and polemics which would prevent any solution of the one problem which mattered, the survival of a people. The duty of the international community was a moral duty, and it must do everything in its power to ensure that the hopes placed in it by the Khmer people and by world opinion were not disappointed. By taking exceptional action, the United Nations would be able to prove that it could contribute to building a more humane world, a world of greater solidarity.

8. The efforts already made by UNICEF, ICRC, UNHCR, the World Food Programme and numerous voluntary associations deserved recognition even though the magnitude of the obstacles encountered had prevented that endeavour from being as effective as it might have been. In spite of their own difficulties, the countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations had also done a great deal and were prepared, for the sake of regional solidarity, to continue on that path; they should be helped in that endeavour. All those who wielded practical authority in the area must leave aside judgements and condemnations and help in the implementation of a rescue plan for the people concerned; the activities envisaged would in no way prejudge a political solution. All means must be used to save the Cambodian people from irreparable disaster. International opinion was deeply

(Representative of France)

disturbed by the sufferings of the Cambodian people and could not allow the vast movement of solidarity which united it to be thwarted or delayed by any considerations which were not consistent with the need to save human lives.

9. The purpose of the Conference was threefold: first, to assemble resources commensurate with needs, second, to ensure that aid was dispatched and distributed urgently, efficiently and impartially under international control and third, to consider the future of the refugees. In view of the scope of the tragedy and the nature of the appeal made to the international community, his Government believed that Europe as such must stand in the forefront of the endeavour and affirm its solidarity of views and capacity for action. France's share in the contribution to be made by the European Economic Community was over $10 million and, in addition, it would be giving about $5 million worth of direct food, financial, agricultural and medical aid. Ultimately, it would be prepared to contribute to the reconstruction of the country in any sphere in which its aid was sought. At the request of the President of the Republic, the Government had also decided to launch a nation-wide fund-raising campaign for the Cambodian people, and private aid initiatives had emerged on a broad scale in the country.

10. The last few weeks had clearly shown that the transport and distribution of aid was the crucial problem. The obstacles must be overcome at all costs by using methods that were as exceptional as the situation itself. Vital equipment must be installed in the ports as well as the necessary labour force; waterways must be brought into use, in particular the Mekong river; and not only Phnom Penh airport, but also the airports of Battambang and Siem Reap, as well as rural airstrips, must be opened to humanitarian traffic. Roads must be re-opened, in particular for relief convoys which should be organized wherever necessary. If all those efforts proved inadequate or unworkable, food and medicines should be dropped by aircraft. France would make the necessary transport aircraft available for that purpose to international organizations if they so wished. The aircraft could fly under the United Nations or Red Cross flag.

11. On the fate of the refugees, his Government welcomed Thailand's humanitarian attitude; it was clear that some part of the aid programme must be devoted to the Khmer refugees accepted by Thailand. All nations must admit a larger number of refugees. France had already admitted 20,000 Cambodians over the previous four years and it had recently decided to admit a further 5,000 South-East Asian refugees. That represented a contribution of over $70 million for the Cambodians alone.

12. France was convinced that the international community would show that it was capable of making a generous effort commensurate with the tragedy; it was not a question of making a gesture to ease one's conscience, but of acting responsibly to avert the disappearance of a member of the international community. The French people had felt intensely the impact of the calamity that was engulfing the Khmer people; long-standing ties of history linked it with that people, who were peace-loving and had given the world one of the most sophisticated civilizations of all

(Representative of France)

times. France therefore wanted to share in the common effort to save that people.

13. The representative of IRELAND, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Economic Community, said that the Government and peoples of the Member States of EEC had been deeply concerned at the ravages of famine and disease afflicting the people of Kampuchea; the immediate humanitarian needs of the Kampuchean people must be met generously and with the utmost urgency. The Member States of EEC had made available $7 million from community resources prior to the joint appeal by UNICEF and ICRC, and on 30 October the Council of Ministers of EEC had approved a further $35 million to support the international relief effort. Taking into account bilateral contributions of Member States amounting to $13.5 million, the over-all contribution of EEC and its Member States amounted to $55.5 million. EEC would closely follow the humanitarian situation in Kampuchea with a view to further assisting in any way it could to relieve that situation.

14. If a calamity of unprecedented proportions was to be averted in Kampuchea, it was vital that relief should be brought quickly and effectively to all those in need. It was therefore important that the international agencies should be able to function with the fullest co-operation of all concerned in carrying out their operations; EEC had full confidence in their ability, given the proper facilities and support, to distribute relief supplies in Kampuchea. The scale of the problem was such that the programme would have to pick up momentum very quickly if relief was to reach the very great numbers of people reported to be in extreme distress in time to save them. The plight of those who were suffering in such vast numbers must be put before any other consideration. Although the humanitarian problems of Kampuchea could be fully resolved only within the terms of an acceptable political settlement, the parties concerned and the international community as a whole must unite in ensuring that the international relief effort met the immediate humanitarian challenge effectively and with all the necessary urgency. Food and medical supplies must reach all those in need of them throughout the country and also the large number of Kampucheans in Thailand. All those concerned must co-operate in seeing that the necessary transport and supply facilities were available and functioning so as to ensure that the relief programme was fully operative in all areas where the Kampuchean people were in need.

15. It was clear that the scale of the problem required a very rapid increase in the scale of humanitarian aid reaching the Kampuchean people if the lives of many thousands were to be saved. The international relief operation must therefore be stepped up as a matter of urgency, and there must be the fullest co-operation in ensuring that the international agencies were able to increase the scale of relief efforts without delay. His Government had in recent weeks donated $300,000 to the relief effort, both directly to the UNICEF/ICRC operation and in the form of support to the activities of a number of Irish non-governmental organizations.

(Representative of Ireland)

It would be making available a further $100,000 immediately and would also be considering additional ways of providing support. It was only by a united effort on the part of all countries, both nationally and at the international level, that the situation could be effectively remedied.

16. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the United Nations had met to act, and to undertake, through individual contributions, an international commitment to deal with a human tragedy of almost unimaginable proportions. The grim facts in Kampuchea were that a nation of 7 million had been ravaged by famine and disease, brutality and war, and some 2 million had perished. It was possible that an entire generation of Kampucheans had been lost. The reality of Kampuchea was most powerfully conveyed by the images of suffering carried in the daily newspapers. The presence of representatives of Governments at the Conference reflected the concern of millions of human beings in all countries who cared about the suffering in Kampuchea. It was an issue that transcended politics. The differences among Governments on the political situation in Kampuchea must be put aside, and the authorities involved in Kampuchea must turn away from calculations of political and military advantage and consider the overwhelming human issue at stake. He praised the Government of Thailand for its courageous decision to allow into its country large numbers of people fleeing famine and disease. That placed an immense burden on the Thai Government, and it deserved the full support of the internationcal community.

17. The President of the United States had committed a United States contribution during the next six months of $30 million for international relief efforts in Kampuchea and $9 million for the Khmer refugees who had fled to Thailand. The United States Congress was approving $30 million of additional funds for the next phase of relief efforts, in addition to the already substantial United States contributions to the refugee programme in the same area. The United States would give full support, in any way that would be helpful, to the efforts of the United Nations, UNICEF and ICRC, and private voluntary groups. The international community must pursue every avenue and use every means to bring relief supplies to people desperately in need. Whether through Thailand, through Viet Nam or by sea, by truck, airlift or river transport, food and medicine, in sufficient quantities, must be delivered. The international relief agencies must be allowed to do their work to ensure that the help reached the people so desperately in need.

18. The representative of JAPAN read out a message from Mr. Sonoda, the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, stating that the Government of Japan strongly believed that it was the urgent task of the international community to extend assistance to the Kampuchean people and that humanitarian concern must transcend political differences among all parties involved; appealing to international organizations to organize relief efforts; and expressing the hope that the Conference would accelerate humanitarian emergency aid to the Kampuchean people and thereby strengthen the role of the United Nations in solving humanitarian problems in the world.

(Representative of Japan)

19. His Government had participated in international relief efforts which represented the conscience and hope of mankind throughout the world. Yet at present it was possible only to administer emergency and stop-gap treatment. It was profoundly distressing that the international community had not taken action long ago to help solve the basic problems and conflicts in the area, and it was the paramount duty of all States Members of the United Nations to find ways and means by which the Organization could be an effective instrument for the solution of the Kampuchean problem. Humanitarian concerns should be placed above political differences in order to establish a reliable system administered by international organizations which could quickly bring humanitarian assistance to the suffering Kampuchean people. At the same time, relief efforts should be made to lighten the financial and other burdens imposed on Thailand and other neighbouring countries by the massive influx of refugees.

20. In response to the appeal by UNICEF, his Government had made a contribution on 14 September. It had contributed 500 million yen to ICRC for its relief programmes for the Kampuchean people, 300 million yen to the Government of Thailand for its relief programmes for refugees in Kampuchea and, from its pledged contribution to the World Food Programme, $500,000 for Thai evacuees in the border area. His Government welcomed the appeal for contributions to the ICRC/UNICEF six-month emergency assistance plan, and in response to that appeal it planned to provide additional assistance amounting to 1 billion yen, mainly in the form of food and medical supplies which would be channelled through international organizations to people in Kampuchea and to Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. Thus its total contribution to Kampuchean relief programmes amounted to approximately $10 million. The Japanese Red Cross, representing the private sector, had decided to send a medical team to the area. Furthermore, his Government had contributed $31.5 million to the 1979 UNHCR Indo-China refugee relief programme, a portion of which went towards relief activities for Kampuchean refugees. Plans were under way to provide an additional contribution of approximately $30 million to UNHCR for its 1979 Indo-China relief programme, and his Government also intended to support the 1980 UNHCR relief programme for Indo-China.

21. He appealed to all Member States to join those international efforts and called upon all the authorities involved in the relief programme to intensify their co-operation with ICRC and UNICEF for the speedy distribution of relief supplies to the Kampuchean people. In view of the severe bottle-neck caused by limited distribution capacity, he hoped that, in addition to air and sea routes, land routes from Thailand could be used for the effective and rapid distribution of relief materials to the Kampuchean people. His Government hoped that the United Nations would continue to confront the problem in a vigorous manner and supported the proposal by the Government of Thailand to send a United Nations team to observe the situation in the Thai-Kampuchean border area. The responsibilities of the United Nations extended well into the future, and it should begin to consider how it could effectively contribute to the restoration and rehabilitation of the afflicted areas and ensure the peace and stability of the region in the future.

22. The representative of the PHILIPPINES said that the international community was faced with an extreme situation in which nations must set aside their differences and act, for the right to life of an entire population, numbering in the millions, was in extreme jeopardy; the Kampuchean people were going through the slow and excruciating process of death by starvation or disease. He noted that there might be some who hesitated to help because of their desire to maintain peace in the area and not to appear to take sides or to disturb the delicate political balance existing in Kampuchea; they should, however, realize that acting together in response to an emergency was not to pronounce judgement on anyone. For the suffering Kampucheans, the matter was very simple and had very little to do with politics, ideologies, economics, national interests or the balance of power; they simply needed food, medicine, clothing and shelter. The United Nations must show that it could act to strengthen peace and translate the universal concern for human rights into concerted action to save a nation in distress. Furthermore, each nation should remember that it could at sometime in the future be in the same desperate position as the people of Kampuchea, at which time it would hope that at least part of the world would show humanitarian concern for those in distress.

23. To his Government the matter was of particular concern because of the proximity of Kampuchea to the Philippines and the fact that it was not the first time that such problems had arisen in the region or that the Philippines had responded unhesitatingly and in a positive and humanitarian manner to such needs. His Government had already set up two reception and processing centres for Indo-Chinese refugees arriving by sea, with a total capacity of 60,000 persons. Furthermore, his Government pledged an initial sum of $15,000 to the effort to save the Kampuchean people, both within and outside the country. Filippino medical doctors and personnel would also be made available, if they were allowed to participate in extending medical help to the refugees.

24. It should be remembered that the fate of the brave Kampuchean people would lie for all time on the conscience of the world community. He hoped that now, when the need was pressing, the world community would be able to set aside differences and other constraints and give expression to the spirit which had united all nations in the first instance, namely the sense of being their brother's keeper.

25. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that the welfare of the peoples of Indo-China, no less than the stability of South-East Asia, was a matter of great concern for his country, which had sought to involve itself constructively in the affairs and development of that region since the Second World War. Regrettably, the international community today was witnessing in Kampuchea a tragic manifestation of the upheavals through which the region had been passing. The disaster that had befallen the Khmer people and their culture was possibly without parallel in modern times. Casualties ran into the hundreds of thousands, and the extent of man's inhumanity to man in that modern holocaust seemed to have known no limits. Seldom before had it been more vital to allocate to humanitarian considerations such absolute priority in a context where the underlying and continuing causes cried out for condemnation.

26. To date, $A 2.5 million had been raised through the Kampuchean relief appeal launched by Australian non-governmental relief organizations. The Government itself

(Representative of Australia)

had already contributed almost $A 4 million to support international efforts to alleviate the plight of civilians in Kampuchea. Following a contribution of 4,000 tons of rice to the World Food Programme, cash grants of $A 250,000 had been made to ICRC, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. An additional sum of $A 250,000 had been given to the Government of Thailand because of the burden imposed on that country by the flow of refugees from Kampuchea. The sum of $A 200,000 was also being allocated to the Australian International Disaster Emergencies Committee (IDEC) to support a number of voluntary relief agencies. Three airlifts of supplies from his country to Phnom Penh had been made at a cost of approximately $A 250,000. In response to an appeal by ICRC and the Thai Red Cross, his country had agreed to fund an Australian medical team to work for six months among refugees in Thailand.

27. The co-operation of all the authorities concerned was important in order to ensure that aid reached every person in need. The international relief agencies had defined an appropriate programme of relief assistance and were sparing no efforts to bring relief to all the innocent victims of oppression and conflict in Kampuchea. They deserved the support of the entire international community in their endeavours. Without their work and co-operation neither governmental nor private relief efforts would have been possible in Kampuchea.

28. The Government of Thailand had already made major sacrifices to accommodate the heavy influx of refugees across its borders, and only if the entire international community was prepared to lend assistance would that country be able to cope with the problem. His country, which had admitted more Indo-Chinese refugees in proportion to the size of its population than any other nation, was prepared to provide such assistance. The international community was united in its determination to avert a major human catastrophe. Immediate efforts must be directed to providing and supporting operations to alleviate disease and deprivation throughout Kampuchea. Lives would be lost if aid was not moved in expeditiously and efficiently. Yet the economy and infrastructure of Kampuchea were shattered. Without a concentrated effort to improve the means of distribution of relief supplies on the ground, the best intentions could be frustrated by logistical problems. It was therefore not too early to consider the long-term rehabilitation of Kampuchea. The conditions that had given rise to that disaster must never be allowed to recur. The task of reconstruction would ultimately be as important as the immediate need for relief. Accordingly, his Government had decided to double its contribution by pledging $A 4 million in addition to the $A 3.8 million that it had already provided. That new contribution would thus raise his Government's total contribution to $A 7.8 million. Taking into account the $A 2.5 million raised by Australian non-governmental relief organizations, his country's contribution would be well over $A 7.8 million.

29. The representative of CANADA said that the resettlement programme for 50,000 Indo-Chinese refugees, to which Canada had committed itself at the August meeting in Geneva on the South-East Asian refugees, was well under way, thanks in large part to the joint efforts of individual Canadians and the federal and provincial Governments. However, the tragic situation in the region was continuing and it was now clear that the entire Khmer people of Kampuchea were faced with annihilation. The survivors of the brutal rule of the Pol Pot régime were affected

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(Representative of Canada)

by war, disease and famine on a scale unequalled in modern times and did not have the means, the strength or the physical security to plant new crops. The ability of the world community to prevent the annihilation of the entire Khmer people through famine and warfare would be a measure of the humanity and effectiveness of the global institutions which had been established. The work already done by ICRC and UNICEF to persuade the Governments concerned to agree to the delivery of food and medical assistance to the suffering civilian population was to be applauded, although they had met with all too little success in gaining the co-operation of the warring régimes. It was now the turn of the international community to come to the aid of those who had so valiantly been trying to deal with the tragedy. In that connexion, she praised the open asylum policy and generous assistance of Thailand.

30. When the facts of the situation in Kampuchea had become more clearly known t. the Canadian people, they had encouraged their Government to triple the initially pledged contribution of $5 million. She was confident that the resulting government contribution of $15 million would be complemented by private donations, just as private sponsorship had allowed Canada to accommodate more refugees than the Government alone could have managed.

31. Furthermore, the people of Canada demanded that their representative should convey their deep sense of outrage at the man-made causes of the tragedy in Kampuchea. The root causes of that appalling situation, i.e. the political problems confronting Indochina, and Kampuchea in particular, must be solved. The Vietnamese Government, along with the Heng Samrin and Pol Pot authorities, must stop playing politics with the very lives of millions of people. They must immediately allow the full and free operation of the international relief organizations that were even now ready and able to stem the tide of death. That they had not already done so must forever condemn them in the eyes of the world. Stability must be restored to the area as soon as possible, so as to reduce the threat to international peace and security. Furthermore, independence and territorial integrity must be returned to Kampuchea under a government that reflected the genuine wishes of the Kampuchean people. Hositlities must be brought to an end and the foreign forces now occupying much of the country must be withdrawn. Without a political settlement, hopes for an end to the human suffering in Kampuchea would be in vain. Some satisfactory proposal must be developed and adopted to allow the interested parties to come to the negotiating table. Canada would support any proposal that offered some hope of success in that area.

32. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that his Government had for a long time been seriously concerned about the situation in Kampuchea. When reports had first been published about the violations of human rights in Kampuchea, they had aroused the horror and indignation of the Parliament and people of the United Kingdom. Although those reports had been dismissed by some as "unreliable", it was a sobering thought that, had the United Nations been permitted to act more decisively at the time, many thousands of lives might have been saved. Now, as a result of massacre, foreign military intervention and famine, as much as one half of the population of the country might already have been lost and the survivors were in piteous condition. The international community must not fail the people of Kampuchea a second time, but must act and act fast.

(Representative of the United Kingdom)

33. In early October the United Kingdom Government had announced a programme of relief for Kampuchea under which the equivalent of $4 million would be provided to ICRC and UNICEF. Furthermore, the equivalent of $1 million would be provided to British voluntary agencies to support their relief efforts for Kampuchea. A gift of at least 1,800 tons of rice would be made available through the World Food Programme for distribution in Kampuchea under the auspices of the ICRC/UNICEF relief programme, at a cost to the United Kingdom Government of over $2 million. A Royal Air Force Hercules aircraft had been put at the disposal of ICRC and was now making regular flights on a daily basis from Bangkok to Phnom Penh with vehicles and relief supplies. An aircraft had been chartered to carry relief supplies provided by British voluntary agencies from the United Kingdom to Kampuchea, at a cost of over half a million dollars. Thus, the total cost of the direct relief programme amounted to about $7.5 million to which should be added indirect contributions through aid being provided by the European Community as a group, 17 to 18 per cent of which approximately $7.5 million was being borne by his Government and people.

34. The international community owed a debt of gratitude to the Government of Thailand for its recent reaffirmation of the principle of asylum for all refugees - already numbering in the thousands - who were crossing its borders to escape the continuing war, famine and epidemics in Kampuchea. In that connexion, he said that Thailand and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees must be provided with additional material support.

35. The international agencies had outstanding experience in relief operations of the kind and their present programme had been set up along practical lines and merited international support. Its success, however, would ultimately depend not only on securing the necessary financial support but also on careful identification of needs and on securing the fullest co-operation of all concerned, in particular with regard to distribution of supplies within Kampuchea.

36. In conclusion he exressed his gratitude for the background information and documentation for the Conference provided by UNICEF and said he hoped that further information would be available concerning the security of deliveries of supplies to and within Kampuchea.

37. The representative of the FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY said that the starving people of Kampuchea could not wait for help until the necessary political solutions had been found, and the international community must take immediate and vigorous action on their behalf. Although large-scale efforts had already been initiated both within and outside the United Nations system to provide the people of Kampuchea with the necessary assistance, more resolute action was imperative. In that connexion, he wished to reiterate the appeals made by the President and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country that those responsible should pave the way for relief action. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had continued to emphasize the demand for speedy and effective assistance to the people of Kampuchea that he had made in his statement before the General Assembly during the current session.

(Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany)

38. His country would contribute approximately 31 per cent of the total additional assistance to the value of $35 million to be made available by the European Community. In addition, his Government had provided $3.6 million as his country's national contribution to UNICEF and ICRC, as well as to the Government of Thailand and private charitable organizations. During the remainder of the current year, his Government would make available an additional $5.5 million to help the people of Kampuchea. It was also endeavouring to provide a further amount of $5.5 million in 1980. A delegation from his country was, moreover, just about to begin negotiations with the Government of Thailand concerning financial assistance in the amount of approximately $11 million to be channelled to areas in Thailand most severely affected by the refugee problem. His country had included Kampucheans in its admission quota for refugees from South-East Asia, and further Kampuchean refugees would thus be admitted in addition to the 800 Kampucheans who had already found refuge in his country. His Government would continue to do everything in its power to help fulfil the desire of the people of Kampuchea to live in peace and dignity.

39. The representative of BELGIUM said that the civilized world was dismayed at the misfortunes that had struck the people of Kampuchea. It had been said in many quarters that the passivity of that people was similar to that of the victims of the Nazi concentration camps. However, in several respects the present holocaust was even more horrifying. In any event, the world would not be able to claim that it had not been aware of the fate of the Kampucheans. The world had rarely been so clearly confronted with the responsibility to show fundamental international solidarity. That demonstration of solidarity must, however, come from all sides and without delay. His country therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to convene the current Pledging Conference. From the indications already given by a number of Governments, it appeared that considerable sums of money would be made available and that the international community would be able to mobilize the resources required to alleviate the suffering of the Kampuchean people. He welcomed the fact that that Conference was being held in the General Assembly Hall where all too often only clichés had been uttered.

40. His country would contribute its share of the contribution of $55 million announced by the countries of the European Economic Community. On a bilateral basis, his Government would also make available BF 9,750,000 for joint UNICEF/ICRC action in Kampuchea and BF 7,300,000 for UNHCR assistance in Thailand to Kampuchean refugees. The possibility of a further contribution being made subsequently was under consideration. Moreover, the sums that he had announced did not include action undertaken in his country to receive and integrate South-East Asian refugees and the payment of related costs.

41. His country encouraged UNICEF, ICRC, UNHCR and the World Food Programme to continue their humanitarian assistance to all the needy in a neutral and impartial manner. It also appreciated the measures taken by the Government of Thailand to assist refugees in its territory. There was no question of the international community's humanitarian assistance slackening or being prohibited. Although the Government of Viet Nam and the other parties concerned were confronted with enormous problems, they must do everything within their power to facilitate the task of the international agencies, whether it was a question of admitting a sufficient number of UNICEF or ICRC officials into Kampuchea, organizing or facilitating transportation of humanitarian assistance or allowing those two

(Representative of Belgium)

agencies to exercise a degree of local control over distribution of aid, which was wanted by the international community specifically for the Kampuchean population. If there were other essential needs in the region they must be stated so that they could be considered as well. Finally, the solution to the political problem must be sought in the context of respect for the principles laid down in the Charter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

42. The representative of SWEDEN said that although the international community had received reports of severe famine in Kampuchea several months earlier, international efforts to assist the people of Kampuchea had only recently begun to gain significance. Many members of the international community had felt frustration and anger at the slow pace at which the current emergency relief programme had emerged and at the many obstacles that had stood in the way of an effective programme of assistance. Now that that programme was finally under way, supplementing the efforts being made through bilateral channels, it naturally had his Government's full support. Since the programme would require large-scale transport operations by land and sea, his country hoped that the international relief organizations would be offered the full co-operation of all parties concerned in that regard.

43. The exodus of refugees from Kampuchea to Thailand placed a heavy responsibility on the international community, which must support the humanitarian efforts being made by the Government of Thailand to assist the large refugee population. The programme of co-operation that UNICEF, ICRC and UNHCR had initiated with the Thai authorities also had his Government's full support.

44. His Government had allocated SKr 20 million to the joint UNICEF/ICRC operations in Kampuchea. Some SKr 5 million had, furthermore, been contributed to ICRC, the World Food Programme and UNHCR for their programmes for Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. In all, his country's pledges amounted to approximately $6 million. His Government was ready to do whatever it could to support international efforts, including making further contributions to relief programmes and to programmes aimed at restoring Kampuchea's own food production.

45. The representative of THAILAND expressed his delegation's appreciation of the timely convening of the current Pledging Conference and said that, without immediate and sustained action on the part of the international community, the future was uncertain for the civilian population inside Kampuchea as well as for those who were fleeing war and famine in increasing numbers. It was impossible to assess how many millions had already died, how many persons had been uprooted from their homes and forced to seek refuge in any country that might accept them, or how many more would leave if they could. What was clear was that the greatest wave of enforced migration since the Second World War was taking place in South-East Asia, and the greatest impact of that wave was being felt in his country.

46. As more and more people had left Kampuchea, Laos and Viet Nam, his country had tried to respond with compassion. During the past four years his country had provided temporary refuge for hundreds of thousands of refugees and, currently, there were perhaps as many as 300,000 persons poised to cross the border into Thailand if there was any flare-up in the fighting. Since many of those people were ravaged by disease and starvation, large numbers of them would die even if they received immediate assistance.

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(Representative of Thailand)

47. Many countries and international organizations had responded generously to his country's request for help in coping with that growing burden. However, his country's resources were limited, and it needed the help of compassionate peoples and nations everywhere. As a result of renewed fighting in Kampuchea in the past month, more than 200,000 people had sought refuge in his country. His people firmly believed in the dignity and worth of man. They did not inquire into the refugees' political persuasions and they were not unduly concerned at the burden that they would have to bear, whatever the attitude of the international community. His country's Prime Minister had stated that nobody would be turned back, however large the influx of the refugees might grow. His Government also offered to provide the bona fide international relief agencies concerned with the necessary facilities for transporting relief assistance destined for the Kampuchean people. It would likewise continue to co-operate with the United Nations and other international organizations concerned. Furthermore, his Government had taken the initiative in co-ordinating international efforts at Bangkok by inviting 18 prospective donor countries to work together with the representatives of the various international relief organizations. From the outset, the Thai Red Cross had been pursuing medical and other relief efforts among the Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. He wished to express his Government's appreciation to UNICEF, the World Food Programme, UNHCR and ICRC, as well as to the special representative of the Secretary-General in Thailand, for their invaluable assistance.

48. His country fully supported the attempt being made by concerned nations and international humanitarian agencies to distribute food and medical supplies for the relief of Kampuchea, regardless of the political coloration of the belligerents. Although the burden resulting from the refugee exodus from Indo-China had grown over the past two years, the number of those that seemed ready to share that burden had also grown. The momentum that had been gained must not be allowed to slacken. The assistance that had been forthcoming to his country to help maintain the existence of the Khmer people must be increased. Concerted international action must include: a greater effort to relieve the burden on Thailand, both by increasing the rate of third-country resettlement for Indo-Chinese refugees and by providing supplies for Kampuchean refugees in his country until such time as they could return peacefully to their country; continued efforts to provide all the needy within Kampuchea with life-sustaining supplies, regardless of politics; recognition of the fact that solutions to those problems would necessarily be of a long-range character and would require the co-operation and acquiescence of many parties that had as yet not been able to reach agreement, as well as of the fact that, in the meantime, the task of continuing to provide assistance must be shared more equitably by all nations in accordance with their capabilities; and finally, a greater international effort to restore peace to Kampuchea and guarantee the survival of an independent Khmer people and nation.

49. Thailand renewed its commitment to co-operate with all nations in seeking peaceful solutions and in providing refuge to desperate Kampucheans. His country's co-operation in that respect was to be regarded as its pledge and contribution to the current international humanitarian effort. The necessary help should be forthcoming from the international community to satisfy not only immediate needs but also long-term requirements. Although relief measures would keep a certain

(Representative of Thailand)

proportion of the Khmer people alive, a peaceful solution to the problem of Kampuchea was the only means of putting an end to a tragedy of unparalleled magnitude in the history of mankind.

50. The representative of SINGAPORE said that the convening of the current Pledging Conference presupposed that there was an emergency situation in Kampuchea, and it was therefore puzzling that the Minister of Defence of the Heng Samrin régime should recently have stated in Moscow that all talk of a famine in Kampuchea was the invention of Western imperialists and Chinese expansionists. A statement issued by the SPK Information Agency of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, circulated at the request of the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam in document A/34/623, made a similar assertion. However, evidence from objective sources, such as ICRC, UNICEF, FAO and the World Food Programme, showed convincingly that the people of Kampuchea were suffering from famine, disease, malnutrition and other forms of deprivation. According to an ICRC report, approximately 2.5 million Kampucheans were in extreme need of food and medical and other supplies. Disease had taken a heavy toll of those weakened by hunger, and the number of children under the age of five was abnormally low. The actions of the members of the Heng Samrin régime contradicted their words. If there was no famine, he wondered why the National Unity Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea had established an Anti-Famine Committee. Moreover, in September of the current year the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Heng Samrin régime had addressed an urgent request to the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme for emergency food aid.

51. That evidence and the condition of Kampucheans who had fled across the border into Thailand established clearly to what extent the people of Kampuchea were suffering. The human family had a duty to take prompt action to relieve their distress. In the present instance, Member States must concentrate their efforts on how the international community could assist all Kampucheans, regardless of political considerations. His Government, which did not recognize the Heng Samrin régime, was nevertheless whole heartedly in support of all efforts by the international community to bring relief to the people of Kampuchea, including those who lived under the political control of that régime.

52. Four principles should govern the relief efforts of the international community: aid must be for the civilian population of Kampuchea; aid must be distributed impartially, without discrimination between those living under the control of the two rival groups; delivery of aid must be monitored in order to prevent its diversion to assist the war effort of the belligerents and the foreign forces; the civilian population of Kampuchea that had fled to Thailand must also be given aid.

53. His Government pledged a contribution of $10,000, half of which was to be allocated to the UNICEF/ICRC programme and the other half to the UNHCR programme.

54. The representative of the UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS said that his delegation wished to take advantage of the opportunity to describe the large amount of humanitarian assistance, primarily food and medicines, which had been provided by

(Representative of USSR)

the Soviet people to the friendly people of Kampuchea in its hour of need. At the request of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the Soviet Union had, during the initial stages of the restoration of the Kampuchean economy, provided, in the form of grants through government channels and gifts from Soviet public organizations, approximately $85 million worth of goods, including grain, medical supplies, automobiles and buses, petroleum products, sheet iron, cement, paper, bicycles, radio receivers, cloth and household items. Furthermore, a programme was now being worked out to provide immediate assistance to the people of the People's Republic of Kampuchea for the restoration of the main branches of the economy, in particular, health, energy production, communications, agriculture and forestry, education, and municipal services and utilities. Soviet assistance, which was provided, like that from all socialist countries, on a bilateral and explicitly humanitarian and disinterested basis, had been of great help in restoring normal conditions in the country, as had been attested by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in document A/34/564. Governments which were genuinely interested in providing effective assistance to the Kampuchean people through international organizations or on a bilateral basis should channel their efforts through the Government of Kampuchea, namely the People's Revolutionary Council. In that connexion, he observed that statements made by certain delegations to the Conference, in particular that of Canada, did not reflect the humanitarian purposes of the Conference or the interests of the Kampuchean people.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.